

# Long Leys News

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## Village Centre Project FAQs

In advance of the AGM: 6.45pm Tues 1 Nov, Discovery Café, St. Georges Hospital below are some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Long Leys Village Centre project. For AGM details see: [long-leys.org/agm](https://long-leys.org/agm).

At the AGM local city and county councillors will attend. The city council's planning policy manager will be there to answer resident questions on the Community Right to Build (CRB) planning process. A representative of Lincolnshire Food Partnership will also be in attendance.

### What Is The Vote On The Village Centre Project For?

The vote will confirm whether Long Leys residents wish LLRA to proceed further with the Village Centre project to deliver new facilities. It is not specific approval of all or any specific detail in the initial proposal as this may change and evolve during the consultations. Nothing is set in stone.

Approval of the resolution would mean LLRA employs a (grant funded) professional planning consultant to undertake consultations with the community to evolve the project further. A no vote means LLRA would cease active work on delivering these additional facilities in Long Leys.

### What Is The Project Aim?

The Long Leys Village Centre project aim is to deliver a local shop, community hub & community growing centre by 2025.

Delivering facilities, designed as a "Place for Everyone", within a 10-minute walk of homes (20-minute round trip), would:

- Provide significant opportunities for social interaction and help to address loneliness and mental health issues.
- Encourage a switch to walking and cycling to improve health and wellbeing.
- Improve allotment access and boost access to fresh food grown in Long Leys.

Long Leys Village Centre project resolution: *The Long Leys Community approves the further development of a plan to deliver the Village Centre Project as broadly described in the February 2022 launch leaflet and requests that Carholme Councillors take an active role in helping deliver these much-needed local facilities for residents.*

For full details visit [long-leys.org/village](https://long-leys.org/village)

### What Is The AGM Voting Process?

Voting on the Village Centre resolution at the AGM will be done by ballot paper, rather than a public show of hands. This ensures every resident can vote the way they wish, without undue pressure from those with different views. Please do come along to cast your vote on this project. Unfortunately, the current LLRA constitution only allows for voting in person at the meeting. A proposed change to the constitution, to allow absentee or proxy voting in the future, will also be considered at the AGM.

### Why Was The Current Site Chosen?

LLRA have been in dialogue with the city council for over a year now on suitable locations for new facilities. Finding a suitable site in Long Leys is not easy.

Retailers indicated that a typical village store required:

- 0.5-acre (2,000m<sup>2</sup>) area with single storey 400m<sup>2</sup> building footprint.
- Space for up to 20 cars for parking and deliveries.
- Immediate access off Long Leys Road.
- Within a 10-minute walk of the majority of homes.

Typical village halls require around 0.25 acres (1,000m<sup>2</sup>) with a single storey building footprint of circa 400m<sup>2</sup>.

A number of sites in Long Leys were reviewed with retailers and independent planners. The only site that currently meets the project criteria is plots 1-10 of the 223 plots at Long Leys Road allotments. Use of this site would need approval from the Secretary of State. (See Briefing sheet 4 at [long-leys.org/village](https://long-leys.org/village)). Eight allotment tenants affected would be offered alternative plots. There is scope to accommodate tenants nearby since 38 plots are currently let out on an agricultural tenancy due to a lack of demand in the past.

LLRA has previously confirmed to City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) its willingness to consider other site options if they become available and meet the project criteria. So far CoLC has drawn a blank. As an example, in March 2022 LLRA attended a meeting organised by the city council's Director for Communities & Engagement with senior NHS directors, to explore whether there was any prospect of using the St George's hospital site for all or part of the Community Right to Build project. The meeting confirmed that this does not appear a realistic possibility within the next 5-10 years.

LLRA continues to review potential site locations on Long Leys Road but is not aware of any suitable site becoming available in an appropriate timescale.

## How Did The Village Centre Project Evolve?

Residents have highlighted, for some considerable time, the shortage of facilities within reasonable walking distance of homes. In 2018 attendees at the LLRA AGM voted to apply for Neighbourhood Forum status for Long Leys to allow the community to explore this for themselves.

An initial survey in 2019 identified a shop and a meeting place as two of the key priorities for any Neighbourhood Plan. Work continued during COVID lockdowns and in March 2021 a shop survey, limited to online residents due to COVID restrictions, explored resident requirements and possible locations. 177 responses were received, primarily from residents, with 91% positive (161 responses), 3% neutral (6 responses) and 6% opposed (11 responses).

Following the survey, the LLRA management committee set up a project team to explore options and develop a proposal. Following some months of work by the project team an initial draft of the proposal was presented to the management committee and the city council in October 2021. Dialogue continued with a finalised version of the initial project proposal approved unanimously by the LLRA management committee in February 2022, prior to launch of the project.

## Will The Community Hub Be Licensed?

To repeat previous clarifications, there is no mention of providing a licensed venue in any of the LLRA published information. None of the business models for the community hub that LLRA has explored are based on becoming licensed premises or selling alcoholic drinks. By majority consensus of those most closely affected, it would be reasonable to provision for a permanent veto on any specific event or activity at the community hub that causes concern.

## How Does The Community Right To Build (CRB) Planning Process Compare To A Traditional Planning Process?

The Community Right to Build planning process was introduced by the government as part of the Localism Act (2011) to address known issues with how local communities are treated by the traditional planning process.

The planning assessment in a CRB is equally thorough as the traditional planning processes but additionally strengthens the influence of the local community. City of Lincoln Council (CoLC) is the Local Planning Authority in both processes.

- In the case of a CRB, the city council appoints an independent professional planning examiner, rather than using one of its in-house team.
- The planning examination in either case compares the application to both national and local planning policies. Potential concerns such as noise, parking, increased traffic, flooding, litter and pollution would be covered by either process. The planning assessment of them would be identical. With the CRB, additional protections for nearby residents above the legal minimums can be included.
- In the CRB process the application would not be progressed if it did not comply with planning laws. In

the more traditional process, the planning officer makes a recommendation to elected councillors who form the city council planning committee. The committee can override the planning officer's recommendation if they have reasons to do so.

- As an additional final step, a CRB also involves a formal referendum on the application with residents. This exercise is run by the city council's democratic services in the same way that local and national elections are run. A majority is needed for the CRB to be approved.

## Who Would Own The Facilities?

The community hub and community growing centre would likely use charitable status for the benefit and wellbeing of the community. The shop (general convenience store) would likely be operated by a conventional retailer, although one of the organisations providing advice to us (Lincolnshire Food Partnership) has also given examples of successful community operated shops.

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## PLEASE RESPECT THE VIEWS OF OTHERS

LLRA recognises that individual opinions will inevitably differ and recognises the value that different perspectives can offer. Indeed, the express purpose of holding the AGM is to give everyone in the Long Leys community the opportunity to express their views on the matters raised, in order that well informed decisions can be made by majority consensus.

To this end, attendees are respectfully reminded that they are expected to conduct themselves in a reasonable manner throughout the meeting and give others the opportunity to express their views. Please keep contributions as brief and to the point as possible, to allow different views to be heard in the time available.

Ultimately any decisions made will be based on democratic process, not on who talks loudest!

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**KEEP UP TO DATE** on these and other developments by subscribing to the Long Leys Community Email List [long-leys.org/subscribe](https://long-leys.org/subscribe)

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## CONTACT US

Contact LLRA by email [LLRA@long-leys.org](mailto:LLRA@long-leys.org).

This information is available in other languages if required.